(e) whether Government is going to extend this scheme to other States also, and

(f) if so, the name of those States and criteria adopted for their selection?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (f) TPDS is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/UT Governments. The Central Government has taken the responsibility for procurement, storage, transportation and bulk allocation of foodgrains to the States and UTs. The operational responsibilities for allocation of foodgrains within the States/UTs, identification of eligible families living below poverty line, issuance of ration cards to them and supervision over and monitoring of the functioning of Fair Price Shops (FPSs), rest with the concerned State/UT Governments.

The Government of India has not issued Food Coupons under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). However, Food Coupons have been introduced under TPDS by some of the State Governments on their own *viz*. Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Bihar. Andhra Pradesh Government has introduced ration cards with biometric features of family members alongwith Bar Coded Coupons for drawal of rice and kerosene to ensure that there is no impersonation/false accounting in distribution of essential commodities by the Fair Price Shop Dealers. In J&K, the ration card holders are drawing rations on ration tickets through monthly coupons. As reported by Bihar Government, Bar Coded Coupons with distinct features in them are being issued for distribution of ration/kerosene under TPDS.

The Government has not made any survey about food coupons to ascertain their outcome.

Food safety measures

595. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Government has constituted a 22 member regulatory authority that would judge and rate the food right from kitchens of luxury hotels to the roadside eating joints according to scientific standards;

(b) if so, whether the authority would finalise guidelines by March, 2009;

(c) if so, whether there would be 56 laboratories coming up at different places around the country where food samples would be sent;

(d) whether health officers have been posted on ports to check illegal import of food items; and

(e) if so, to what extent food safety measures have been achieved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (e) The Central Government has established Food Safety and Standards Authority of India under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 *vide* notification No. S. O. 2165 (E) dated 5th September 2008, consisting of 23 members including Chairperson of the Food

Authority. The mandate assigned to the Food Authority is laying down science based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import, to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption. The food samples will continue to be tested in accredited & upgraded Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) laboratories in different parts of the country. Other functions of the Food Authority will follow after the finalisation of the rules, regulations and procedures stated to be completed by December 2009.

Purchase of paddy by FCI and NAFED

†596.SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Food Corporation of India (FCI), purchases adequate quantity of paddy from the farmers in the country;

(b) whether the role of NAFED is also praiseworthy in this matter;

(c) if so, the details along with quantity of paddy being purchased by FCI and NAFED, State-wise;

(d) whether States have any system by which paddy is purchased from farmers at minimum support price; and

(e) if so, the manner in which the Union Government and the State Governments are co-ordinating and the actual status thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. The Government agencies (Food Corporation of India (FCI) and the State agencies) have procured adequate quantity of paddy/rice for the Central Pool to meet the requirements of rice for Targeted Public Distribution System and other Welfare Schemes as well as to maintain buffer stocks.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The State-wise procurement of paddy by FCI and NAFED in Kharif Marketing Season 2008-09 is given in the Statement (*See* below).

(d) and (e) The Government extends price support to paddy through the Food Corporation of India and State agencies. Paddy conforming to the prescribed specifications are bought by the public procurement agencies at Minimum Support Price (MSP). As per Government policy farmers are free to sell their paddy to the Government agencies at MSP or to private agencies, as is advantageous to them. FCI and agencies of State Governments open sufficient number of purchase centres for procurement of paddy. Control Rooms are also opened by FCI and State agencies to monitor procurement operations and to avoid distress sale *i.e.* sale below the MSP.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.